

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-16. (Canceled)

17. (New) An ingestible composition which provides a source of digestible calcium and magnesium and, which, when added to a compound containing releasably bound water, provides a dessicating effect, said composition comprising:

substantially anhydrous calcium lactate; calcium oxide and substantially anhydrous or calcined magnesium sulfate.

18. (New) The composition recited in claim 17, wherein the total percent by weight of calcium lactate is greater than the combined percentage by weight of said anhydrous or calcined magnesium sulfate and said calcium oxide.

19. (New) The composition recited in claim 17, further including a carbonate selected from the group consisting of carbonates and bicarbonates, and mixtures thereof.

20. (New) The composition recited in claim 17, wherein said calcium oxide is present in an amount up to 10% by weight of the composition.

21. (New) The composition recited in claim 17, wherein the anhydrous or calcined magnesium sulfate is present in an amount up to 10% by weight of the composition.

22. (New) The composition recited in claim 17, wherein said calcium oxide forms from 4% by weight to 8% by weight of the composition.

23. (New) The composition recited in claim 17, wherein said anhydrous or calcined magnesium sulfate forms from 1% by weight to 5% by weight of the composition.

24. (New) The composition recited in claim 17, wherein both anhydrous magnesium sulfate and calcined magnesium sulfate are present in the composition.

25. (New) The composition recited in claim 19, wherein said carbonate is an alkalai metal carbonate.

26. (New) The composition recited in claim 19, wherein said bicarbonate is an alkali metal carbonate.
27. (New) The composition recited in claim 17, further including ammonia.
28. (New) The composition recited in claim 19, further including an acid capable of reacting with said carbonate to liberate carbon dioxide.
29. (New) The composition recited in claim 28, wherein said acid is a fruit acid.
30. (New) The composition recited in claim 19, wherein said carbonates and bicarbonates are carbonates and bicarbonates of ammonia, lithium, sodium, potassium, calcium and magnesium, and combinations thereof.
31. (New) The composition recited in claim 29, wherein said fruit acid is selected from the group consisting of citric acid, malic acid, fumaric acid, tartaric acid, ascorbic acid, lactic acid and combinations thereof.